



# ∞ The CDS Weekly ∞

## Catching Up on the Coming Weeks

(415) 861-5432  
March 18, 2004

### Black & White Ball & Auction Saturday, March 20<sup>th</sup>

#### *The Big Night*

Here we are...just a few short days before the CDS party of the year! Those of you who've yet to secure Spring Ball & Auction tickets, don't fret. Stephanie Scarpulla and friends will be selling last minute tickets at drop-off tomorrow morning. And for the true procrastinators among us, tickets will also be available at the door of the Annunciation Cathedral. Thank you to all of you who've already purchased tickets for a faculty member. We are still seeking sponsorships for nearly 50 teachers and their guests. If you're able, your generosity is most appreciated!

If you happen to arrive early to stake out prime territory in the silent auction bidding area, please take pity on later-arriving partygoers and park on the street if possible. The Annunciation Cathedral does have a parking lot, but we expect far more cars than it can accommodate. So if you have an opportunity to create some good pre-auction karma by parking on the street, please take it.

And if you cannot make it to the party in person on Saturday but have your heart set on a custom tattoo of the CDS logo (item 820), professional dental whitening (item 810) or 110 gallons of bio-diesel fuel (item 526), all is not lost. Absentee bids will be accepted this year. You may deputize a friend to bid on your behalf at the auction as long as you provide your deputy with your credit card information or a check payable to CDS. All items must be paid for and retrieved at the end of the evening, with the possible exception of the bio-diesel fuel.

See you on Saturday!

#### *Childcare for Spring Ball & Auction*

Childcare will be available at CDS, courtesy of Rob Gillespie and Michael Gast, elementary extended program teachers. Kids can be dropped off at CDS starting at 6:00 p.m. (doors to the Ball open at 6:30 p.m.) and picked up as late as midnight. Kids should wear pajamas or comfy play clothes. Food, fun and movies will be provided. The cost is \$5 per hour per child. Spaces can be reserved by leaving a message for Mr. Rob at CDS (extension 26), emailing him at [rob@cds-sf.org](mailto:rob@cds-sf.org), or by signing up with Martha at the front desk. Please contact Rob with any questions.

### Words From Rick

#### *A Salamander and Her Friends*

"Do not train children to learning by force and harshness, but direct them to it by what amuses their minds so that you may be better able to discover with accuracy the peculiar bent of genius in each."

### ∞ This Week's Hot Dates ∞



#### **Saturday, March 20<sup>th</sup>**

6:30 p.m. – Midnight

Black & White Ball & Auction

Annunciation Cathedral

245 Valencia Street, near 14<sup>th</sup> Street

#### **Monday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>**

5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Knit & Spin

Faculty Lounge

#### **Wednesday, March 24<sup>th</sup>**

Registration Deadline for Spring Electives

### Thank You!

- ▶ To Laura Moon who donated a red, blue and yellow trike for use on the play yard.
- ▶ To Kit Land for her gift to the Spanish Department.

Not a bad mission statement for CDS. Helping children discover their peculiar genius in a caring environment—and it was written about 2400 years ago by a certain Greek named Plato.

After school, the first week in March, a group of second graders, with Ms. Brittany in smiling attendance, brought me a salamander. One of their classmates found it, and they judged it needed care. So, (as several of them later wrote), they found a home for it, providing it dirt, water and plant matter. They had studied worms in class and learned a number of observational skills such as shining a flashlight on them in order to see through their translucent skin. Under careful scrutiny they discovered there was a pink dot on the salamander's belly. One child suggested it was pregnant—she'd read it in a book. Another explained that salamanders are cold-blooded and therefore, those were eggs not embryos. The students decided not to keep her but to release her back into the wild. They reported on their findings at the assembly at the end of the week.

That wasn't the end of it. They wrote about their experience. From that writing sprung other questions: Is it a salamander or a newt? *Does* the pink dot mean it is pregnant? And so on. Other books were assembled, more discoveries made.

Why can't all education be like this? Actually, Children's

Day School is proving that it can. Discoveries like this are being made every day, in and out of the formal curriculum. This is not to say that CDS students spend all their time in the dirt learning about creatures. They spend a large amount of time in a circle, in small study groups, or on their own learning language arts and mathematics. What would have made Plato happy is that academic disciplines are being learned in a creative context.

The context of the CDS experience is intellectually rich, socially complex and emotionally challenging as well as supportive. At the most fundamental level, it is also spiritually enriching. Underlying all these benefits is the word *caring*. The students' discoveries resulted from their caring for the salamander. Genius to Plato meant the origin of a person's uniqueness, one's guiding voice, spirit or soul. Plato understood education to be leading this genius out into the world to live effectively and gracefully within it—finding one's calling. The story makes it obvious that genius is where a person's gifts and the environment come together. Caring is where the action is—quite literally: no caring, no action.

If this is our mission, our students will not only learn to read and write, but will also know they have something to write about and will take to books to know more. They will not only know how to calculate, but will know how to use mathematics for their own empowerment. Research is not a drag, imposed on our students by an arduous homework assignment, but something they do in the natural course of trying to make it in the world. Curiosity is not a distraction from one's purpose; curiosity is the very engine of purpose, and the disciplines of learning are those necessary to satisfy one's interests. Interest is nature's way of guiding a person into the world.

You can tell it's working. CDS students are known for their ability as mathematicians, writers and researchers and are doing beautifully with respect to the "academic standards." Most importantly, it seems not to have occurred to them they love learning. They take it for granted. School is a place which serves their natural love of learning rather than a place they go to suspend their natural curiosity and do boring work understood to be good for them. They perform better because they understand what they are doing and love it. You can also tell it's working because, rather than becoming more and more homogenous, the classes are becoming more and more diverse as each child develops and discovers their "peculiar bent of genius."

## The Dirt

### *Entomology 101*

Class projects are in full swing. The preschool classes are all working on projects related to the garden. The Starfish have shown a particular interest in bees and the Teddy Bear class is investigating flowers, especially tulips and roses. The kindergarten classes are just starting their investigation of "creepy crawlies." This has become an annual kindergarten project because there just seems to be a special connection between five year-olds and critters that leave slime trails, build webs and roll into little balls when touched.

The projects are off to a good start. The classes conducted a field survey of the yard and graphed all of the different species

they found. Kindergartners James, Gabriel and Matthew identified two spiders, male and female *Haplodrassus*, in the garden using a field guide, and then made a short presentation to the class. Their presentation ended in an impromptu web building session when Matthew saw a page in the field guide showing step-by-step how orb-weave spiders build their webs. They gathered sticks, spun a web, and Chloe added a big fuzzy spider fashioned out of pom-poms and telephone wire as a final touch.

Kindergartners have varying reading and writing skills which makes it more difficult for them to conduct certain types of research individually. They can't read detailed books on spiders, snails and centipedes or search for information on the internet by themselves. So how do we create opportunities for them to make their own discoveries? Using the schoolyard as a resource, kindergartners can become entomologists actively involved in field research. Last week, each child had their own "creepy crawlly" to study and observe. They had to investigate its likes, dislikes, what it ate and where it lived by observing it in its natural environment. Upon returning to the classroom, they each frantically filled their papers with drawings and sketches, demonstrating all the things they'd observed out in the garden.

Christopher did research on roly-polies and discovered, "They can turn into little balls. Sometimes you hold them the wrong way and they turn into little balls. They live in dirt. They eat dirt." Electra drew a wonderfully detailed drawing of an ant in a garbage can surrounded by food. She said, "Ants live in garbage cans. They like to eat carrots, cheetos and Kid Chow. They like the dark." Each child had the opportunity to conduct research, record their discoveries and become experts through individual investigations. They also have the chance to see amazing things that aren't found in any books.

When we returned to class, Robert shared the following observation, "I saw an ant trying to eat a beetle. Even though the ant was a lot smaller than the beetle, it kept trying to eat it. The beetle didn't run away but he tucked his head and his legs inside his body."

I asked, "Why did he do that?"

Robert replied, "To protect himself because the outside of his body is really hard like armor."

Fazon enthusiastically jumped in, "Yeah, beetles have a hard shell called an exoskeleton."

Next time you see a kindergarten entomologist in the hall, ask them to share a few details about their current research.

—Morgan Taggart, Environmental Education Resource Teacher

## Why Was School Closed March 12<sup>th</sup>?

Last Friday's Professional Development Day was very successful! "Brain Development and Appropriate Practices" was the CAIS Professional Development Day

hosted by CDS and Ms. Candy (Early Childhood Representative for the CAIS Northern Professional Services Committee) and attended by educators from 17 different schools statewide. Guest speakers Jennifer Brakeman and Nancy Knop discussed recent brain research as it relates to children and educational practices. Yari Mander, music teacher from Live Oak School offered a workshop on appropriate practices in music education. Our own Ms. Elizabeth and Ms. Karen ran subsequent workshops discussing appropriate practices in art education, and Ms. Paula talked about appropriate practices in math education. Thanks to everyone who participated in this fun and informative day.

### Farewell Ms. Emily!

CDS has just received the wistful news that Emily Van Allen, one of our wonderful, head kindergarten teachers, will not be returning in the fall. While exciting prospects clearly await this talented woman and her boyfriend, we will truly miss her. Below is a gracious note from Emily herself. Join us in wishing her the best. Good luck Emily and thanks for all of your hard work!

Dear CDS Families,  
I have exciting news I want to share with you. This summer I will be moving to Cincinnati with my boyfriend, Paul. Paul has been offered a promotion with a company he's been in business with for several years. This means I will not be returning to CDS as a kindergarten teacher in the fall. I am so fond of the school and will miss the families and kids the most. Thanks for everything and I look forward to spending the rest of the year with your kids.  
—Emily Van Allen

### Extended Program News

#### *Spring Break Camp*

Spring Break Camp will be held from April 12<sup>th</sup>– 16<sup>th</sup>, and the theme is Urban Wildlife. **Remember to sign up in advance;** drop-ins are difficult to accommodate with our reduced camp staff.

#### *Spring Electives*

Thanks to those of you who have signed up for Spring Electives already! Electives begin on Monday, March 29<sup>th</sup> and run through Friday, May 21<sup>st</sup>. The registration deadline is Wednesday, March 24<sup>th</sup>.

#### *PM Partnership with Marshall Elementary School*

The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade aftercare classes will be going to Marshall Elementary on Wednesday, March 17<sup>th</sup> to attend a poetry night dress rehearsal put on by the Marshall's 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade after-school program. Students will be leaving CDS at 3:15 p.m. and returning by 5:00 p.m. This field-trip is part of a developing relationship between the after-school programs at CDS and Marshall.

#### *Boys and Girls Club*

Please make sure if you pick up your child directly from the Boys and Girls Club, you first let the teacher know you are

taking your child from the club, and that you sign out at CDS.

#### *PM Program Spring Community Service Project*

Each Tuesday in April will be devoted to projects and activities related to urban wildlife and community service. The PM program's work will culminate in May when we'll be working with the organization Literacy for Environmental Justice doing wetlands and habitat restoration work at the beautiful Heron's Head Wildlife Area on the bay. We will need volunteer drivers and helpers. If you're interested, please call Jenna at extension 15.

—Jenna Stephens, Extended Program Coordinator

### Hola Familias!

Last week was a terrible and sad one for me and for all Spaniards. As you know, March 11<sup>th</sup> marked the worst terrorist attack in our history in Spain's capital, Madrid. In response to the attacks, San Francisco's Spanish community and the Spanish consulate are organizing a fundraiser on March 28<sup>th</sup> for all the victims and victims' families. Look for more information about this event in the next *Weekly*.

Thank you all for your support. I especially want to thank the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders for all of your wonderful fundraising ideas.

Here are *la frase de la semana*:

*Queremos paz.* We want peace.

*Queremos amor.* We want love.

*No queremos guerra* We don't want war.

*Gracias a todos.*

—Consuelo Aparicio-Cercos, Spanish Department

### Knit and Spin, Monday Evenings

The Knitters and Spinners continue to meet every Monday evening from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. in the faculty lounge to share our projects, offer one another help and learn new skills. You're invited! Hope to see you there!

### CDS Parent-Teacher -Trustee- Administrator Association: PTTA Update

*Strategic Planning at CDS -- Please Join in at the  
March 30 PTTA Meeting:*

The next PTTA meeting has been moved forward one week to Tuesday, March 30<sup>th</sup>, and will start earlier than usual, at 4:00 p.m. in the faculty lounge. Rick and other members of the CDS Board of Trustees' Strategic Planning Steering Committee will lead parents in a town-hall meeting to brainstorm big picture strategic planning topics including parents' dreams for CDS in the future, areas in which parents would like to see CDS become stronger, what is already excellent about CDS and what key components of the CDS mission statement mean to parents. Stay tuned for more details, and please plan to share your thoughts about our school on March 30<sup>th</sup>.

*The Country Fair Needs Your Talent!*

The Country Fair Committee is seeking talent for our Country Fair celebration on May 1<sup>st</sup>. Are you a musician? A juggler? A balloon sculptor? Do you have a magnificent talent you'd like to share with the CDS community? Don't hide your talent from your potentially adoring fans! Contact Sally Nielson at [sn@hausrath.com](mailto:sn@hausrath.com) to get involved.

*Friday Morning Coffee*

Schedule a few minutes in your Friday morning to join other parents for hot coffee and grown-up conversation in the yard after drop off, 8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

*PTTA Questions or Ideas?*

Contact Marion Quinones at (415) 701-1957 or [MQuinones@fbm.com](mailto:MQuinones@fbm.com).

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Upcoming on the CDS Calendar



**Monday, March 29<sup>th</sup>**

Spring Electives Begin

**Tuesday, March 30<sup>th</sup>**

4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

PTTA Meeting

Faculty Lounge

**Wednesday, March 31<sup>st</sup>**

Cesar Chavez Birthday

Last Day to Sign Up for Spring Break Camp

**Monday, April 12<sup>th</sup> – Friday, April 16<sup>th</sup>**

Spring Break

Spring Break Camp Available

How to Submit to *The CDS Weekly*.

Submissions are to be received **no later than 8:00 am Wednesday**. Please email them to [cdsweekly@cds-sf.org](mailto:cdsweekly@cds-sf.org)

